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SUBJECT: NOMINATION FOR THE 2010 SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE

FROM AMBASSADOR MICHAEL BATTLE, USAU

¶1. The United States Mission to the African Union (USAU) wishes to nominate Sergeant Angela Nyakeyo for the 2010 Secretary's Award for International Women of Courage. Sergeant Nyakeyo is serving in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), a critical mission that is trying to restore peace and stability in what is arguably one of the most dangerous war zones in the world.

¶2. Sergeant Nyakeyo is a 57-year-old Registered Nurse serving with one of the battalions that her country, Uganda, has contributed to AMISOM. The Ugandan and Burundian battalions that are deployed in Mogadishu, Somalia, currently total some 5,284 personnel, and approximately 5 percent of those forces are women.

¶3. When Sergeant Nyakeyo deployed to Mogadishu, she expected to care for wounded and sick AMISOM troops exclusively. The AMISOM Force Medical Officer in Mogadishu informed USAU that Sergeant Nyakeyo has actually played a major role in helping the local population and improving the image of AMISOM in Mogadishu. On her own initiative and urging, she set up a ward to treat working Somali women with obstetric fistula. It is, in fact, the only facility in Somalia capable of treating fistula cases.

¶4. Notwithstanding the incredibly austere conditions and frequent IED explosions and mortar attacks around the camp, Sergeant Nyakeyo has assisted in the operation of 50 fistula patients in the war-ravaged region of Mogadishu. These operations are futile if there is no proper post-operative care. This post-operative care involves daily dressing of wounds for those Somali women who have undergone abdominal surgery, changing of diapers, and bladder training. In addition, the women need to be counseled about post-operative issues that may arise, including the risks of resuming sexual intercourse prematurely. Sergeant Nyakeyo took the time to counsel Somali women who had undergone fistula repair. She also provided them with mats to weave during their recovery period.

¶5. According to the AMISOM Force Medical Officer, Somali women with fistula are often abandoned by their husbands and become jobless social outcasts. Through her actions, Sergeant Nyakeyo, working with AMISOM's fistular surgeon, has helped challenge a harmful cultural practice and also has promoted the rights of young Somali women facing unimaginable odds.

¶6. The USAU believes that Sergeant Nyakeyo is highly deserving of consideration for the 2010 Secretary's Award for International Women of Courage. She embodies the tremendous dedication and courage that the entire AMISOM force has demonstrated under fire. In honoring Sergeant Nyakeyo, the U.S. Government, which already has gone to great lengths to support the AMISOM peacekeeping troops logistically, financially, and politically, would be paying tribute to all the women who make tremendous sacrifices during times of conflict.

¶7. BIODATA

Name: Angela Mary Nyakeyo

Job Title: Registered Nurse, African Union Mission in Somalia

Date of Birth: 10 Oct 1952

Country of Birth: Uganda

Citizenship: Ugandan

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